



# Opening Doors September

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A publication to promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities within AmeriCorps programs.

## **Welcome**

I extend a sincere welcome to those of you new to the supervision of AmeriCorps members and ensuring inclusive service environments. It is the essential function of the Disability Coordinator to promote inclusion within AmeriCorps programs, interpret policies, guidelines and federal grant administration, monitor the work of grantees, represent the Commission on statewide committees as assigned, and most importantly support programs and members. You'll receive a quarterly, one page newsletter to provide you with current information pertaining to disability issues and include a synopsis of actual scenarios of member issues that have arisen in the national service arena that will be used as best practice models.

## **Reasonable Accommodation Policy/Disclosure Notice**

Policy, procedures and the form for requesting funds for reasonable accommodation have recently been revised.

Each year a request for reasonable accommodation funding is made to the Corporation in accordance to guidelines of the State Commission's Disability Grant. The Governor's Office of Community Service offers reasonable accommodation funds to assist AmeriCorps State program sites operating in Montana. Please visit the link within our new Serve Montana Website to review reasonable accommodation procedures and documents.

Visit the [www.serve.mt.gov](http://www.serve.mt.gov) website and click on the Resources link, Opening Doors and you'll find tools, technical assistance and helpful web links. A disclosure document, within the technical assistance link, should be posted at sites or given to AmeriCorps members at the beginning of their term of service.

## **What Would You Do?**

A service member began serving at a school setting and started having allergic reactions to the cleaning supplies that were used at the school. It started affecting her health, the quality of the program and other members.

## **What Happened**

The school purchased chemical free products even though the member was not defined as having a disability by the ADA. However, the cost of these products utilized all of the reasonable accommodation funds so the member was moved to a different site to finish her term of service.

"It is a fine thing to have ability, but the ability to discover ability in others is the true test." Lou Holtz